

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS, U. S. D. A.

SS - 52

MAR. 14, 1947

LARGE CROP PLANS AGAIN

If farmers carry out their planting intentions reported as of March 1, they will put in a total of 2.3 million acres more crops this spring than they did last. (Though would be 7.4 million acres below 1944 wartime peak). Total acreage of principal crops indicated this year around 358 million acres; which compares with 355½ million last year, average of 355 million in the 10 years 1936-45, and high mark of 375½ million in 1932.

FEED GRAIN PLANS DOWN A LITTLE

According to March plans, farmers will plant 4.4 million acres less of feed grains this spring, a decline of 2.7% under last spring. The indicated declines are 2.7% in corn acreage, about 1% in oats, and 11% in all sorghums. (Barley indicated 1% increase in acreage.) Grain needs are less this year, since number of grain eating animal units on hand at beginning of year were down about 6% under year previous.

Corn acreage to be planted is about 87.6 million acres, down 5.3 million from 1936-45 average. Except for 1941 this would be the smallest corn acreage in 53 years.

Indicated hay acreage unchanged from last year (74.3 million acres).

FOOD CROP PLANS

The principal food crop increases indicated by the intentions reports are rice 2%, dry edible beans 11%, and sugar beets nearly 10%.

Principal decreases are potatoes 12%, sweet potatoes 3%.

Total spring wheat acreage to be sown shows little change, a prospective increase in durum being offset by decrease in other spring wheat.

MORE OILSEED CROPS

Planting intentions for oilseed crops as a group show a big increase over last spring. The percentage increases are flaxseed 70%, soybeans 6%. (Peanuts, however, show a 2.6% decrease in planting intentions).

FREEZE CUT FLORIDA CITRUS 11½ MILLION BOXES

Freeze in early February cut Florida orange crop by an estimated 8 million boxes and grapefruit 3.5 million boxes. On March 1, about 23.5 million boxes of oranges remained in Florida, about same supply as year ago.

Total U. S. citrus production 1946-47 now forecast about 192 million boxes--5% above last season and 44% above the 10-year average. (This total is 11.5 million boxes under the February 1 forecast because of the losses in Florida.) Total orange production forecast 110.8 million boxes--50.6 million early and mid-season and 60.2 million valencias. Total compares with 100.3 million boxes produced in 1945-46. Grapefruit estimated 62.5 million boxes--slightly less than last season's crop (63.6 million boxes).

EARLY LAMB CROP DOWN SHARPLY

Early spring lamb crop down for 6th straight year. Crop this spring estimated 7% under last, and smallest in over 20 years. Due chiefly to decline in number of breeding ewes; number lambs saved per hundred ewes runs above average although slightly below last spring. Lambs developing slower this spring than last; probably means even fewer in market before July 1 than smaller crop would indicate.

SOME REDUCTION IN POULTRY AHEAD?

Farmers in early February indicated intention of buying 6% fewer baby chicks than year ago; if this is carried out would mean laying flock at end of year about like beginning. Feed prices have advanced relative to eggs. Commercial hatcheries hatched 114 million chicks during February, 4% under year ago. Last year intention reports indicated cut of 14% and number chickens actually raised was 4% under intentions; number raised (1946) was 677 million, leaving 436 million hens and pullets on farms at beginning 1947. Slaughter of chickens this year will be about 10% under last, if number chickens raised is moderately less, as intention report suggests.

Sales of chickens from farms in 1946 amounted to 2,261 million pounds live weight, 15% less than in 1945. Young chicken sales were 21% less and old ones 11% less.

Number young pre-layer pullets Feb. 1 was 23.4 million compared with 35.3 million year earlier. Number laying hens 414 million compared with 450 million year ago. Eggs produced in February 4.8 billion, compared with 5 billion year ago and 3.7 billion Feb. average (1936-45). Eggs laid during Jan. and Feb. 9.4 billion, compared with 9.3 billion last year and 6.7 billion average.

PARITY PRICES FOR FARM PRODUCTS AND ACTUAL PRICES RECEIVED

COMMODITY AND UNIT	ACTUAL PRICE		PARITY PRICE
	Jan. 15 1947	Feb. 15 1947	
Wheat, bu. dol.	1.91	1.99	1.95
Corn, bu. dol.	1.21	1.23	1.42
Peanuts, lb. ct.	8.91	9.05	10.60
Cotton, lb. ct.	29.74	30.56	27.40
Potatoes, bu. dol.	1.29	1.31	1.64
Hogs, 100 lb. dol.	21.80	23.80	16.10
Beef cattle, 100 lb. . . dol.	17.30	17.30	12.00
Veal calves, 100 lb. . . dol.	18.00	19.20	14.90
Lambs, 100 lb. dol.	19.00	19.40	13.00
Butterfat, lb. ct.	74.5	67.8	¹ 59.6
Milk, wholesale, 100 lb. . dol.	4.77	4.53	¹ 3.64
Chickens, live, lb. . . . ct.	25.6	25.3	25.2
Eggs, doz. ct.	41.3	38.6	¹ 42.8

¹Adjusted for seasonal variation.

Turkey raisers last month indicated intention to reduce output 16% this year. Average farm price of live turkeys mid-February was 29.8 cents a pound compared with 31.6 cents year previous. Government purchase program will support turkey prices through June 30, 1947.

SUSTAINED MILK PRODUCTION

Milk production during February 8.5 billion pounds, 3% above year ago and 9% above February average 1936-45. Number milk cows about 2% fewer this February than last but milk per cow was up 5% and was heaviest on record for the month. Milk production per cow on March 1 was 15.08 pounds, which was 13% above average and highest on record for the date (due largely to heavy feeding, good care, and previously sharp culling of poor cows). The production of milk per capita of population in February was 2.12 pounds, which was above last year and average but lower than any February during the war, 1941-45.

Milk prices (fluid milk sold in cities) dropped from \$4.97 per 100 lbs. in January to \$4.76 in February.

Butter production this year likely to be well above the low output in 1946. Butter output in December was 88.8 million pounds, 35% over year previous. For February it was 40% above year ago. Total 1946 butter production was 1,150 million pounds. Probable that 1947 will equal 1945, when the total produced was 1,360 million pounds.

SMALL WINTER POTATO CROP

Winter potato crop in Texas and Florida estimated 960,000 bushels, this being 60% smaller than crop harvested in 1946 (2,428,000 bushels) and 36% below the 1936-45 average of 1,508,000 bushels.

The acreage of potatoes planted for early spring harvest in Florida and Lower Valley of Texas estimated 25,100 acres. In 1946 growers harvested 34,900 acres of early spring potatoes and the 1936-45 average harvested acreage was 26,450 acres.

As for stocks of old 1946 crop potatoes on hand near areas of production, March 1, there were plenty of them, 76½ million bushels, 28% above the 60 million on hand a year ago and 49% above two years ago. These are stocks held for sale and do not include those held for home use.

LESS SPINACH AND PEAS AHEAD

Reports from spinach canners and freezers in California and Texas indicate 1947 output of 42,110 tons, which would be 26% under last year and 4% below average.

The acreage of green peas that canners and freezers intend to contract and plant this year is indicated as about 4% below 1946. Should these plans be carried out, the acreage of green peas planted will total 505,890 acres, compared with 525,400 last year and 393,470 average.

THE GREAT SHIFT IN FARM POWER

The shift in farm power from horses and mules to machines is reflected in the postwar figures. Compared with prewar (1935-39 average) the number of horses and mules in 1946 was down 30%. The number of tractors was up 108%. Motortrucks, many of them second hand city or army trucks, were up 59% and even automobiles, despite non-manufacture, were up 5%. The volume of all machinery and equipment other than tractors and motor vehicles doubled. And finally, the total volume of farm power of all kinds, continuing its steady increase, was 33%

above prewar, in 1946. Many farm machines are old; estimate is that 400,000 tractors are past normal discarding age; all replacement needs are great. With output of farm machinery in latter 1946 running 25% above 1945, probability is for further increase on farms this year.

MORE FARM WORKERS

Total number of people working on farms March 1, estimated 8,591,000 compared with 8,263,000 year ago, 9,412,000 March average 1935-39 and 12,052,000 annual average 1910-14. Number family workers 7,046,000 compared with 6,774,000 year ago, 7,492,000 pre-war and 9,160,000 in 1910-14. Number hired workers 1,545,000 compared with 1,489,000 year ago, 1,920,000 pre-war and 2,892,000 in 1910-14. Average working day March 1 was 10.2 hours for farm operators and 9.1 hours for hired workers--somewhat shorter than last year.

FARM RECEIPTS UP

Cash receipts from produce sold by farmers during January amounted to \$2,180 million compared with \$1,648 million year earlier and \$1,798 million 2 years earlier. The figure this January included \$36 million Government payments compared with \$114 million year ago and \$87 million 2 years ago. Preliminary estimates indicate that total receipts during first quarter of 1947 will be about \$5.7 billion, 25% more than last year.

FARM TENANCY AT LOW EBB

1945 census (preliminary) shows only 32% of American farms run by tenants and croppers. This compares with 39% back in 1940 and a high of 42% in the thirties. Big decrease in the South - a drop of 280,000 in tenant farms, leaving about 40% of southern farms run by tenants in 1945. North had 25% tenancy, West 15%.

CURRENT INDEXES FOR AGRICULTURE		
INDEX NUMBERS	BASE PERIOD	Feb. 1947
Prices received by farmers . .	1910-14 = 100	262
Prices paid by farmers, interest and taxes	1910-14 = 100	221
Parity ratio	1910-14 = 100	119
Wholesale prices of food . .	1910-14 = 100	249
Retail prices of food . . .	1910-14 = 100	1237
Farm wage rates	1910-14 = 100	1383
Weekly factory earnings . .	1910-14 = 100	2417
RATIOS	LONG-TIME Feb. - AVERAGE	Feb. 1947
Hog-corn ratio, U. S. . . .	12.9	19.4
Butterfat-feed ratio, U. S. .	24.9	24.6
Milk-feed ratio, U. S. . . .	1.30	1.42
Egg-feed ratio, U. S. . . .	11.6	11.3
PRODUCTION COMPARISONS	Jan. - Dec. 1945	Jan.-Dec. 1946
Milk, (Bil. lb.)	122.2	119.9
Eggs, (Bil.)	55.2	54.9
Beef, (Dr. wt., mil. lb.) . .	7,240	5,666
Lamb & Mutton (Dr. wt., mil. lb.)	913	850
Pork & Lard (Mil. lb.) . . .	8,189	8,490
All meats (Dr. wt., mil. lb.)	17,165	15,648
1 Jan. figure.		
2 Factory pay roll per employed worker, Dec. fig.		